



City of Monterey Park

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Healthy Community Element



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Introduction

Health and wellness are important values of the people in Monterey Park that form the basis of each community member's quality of life. Most people try to make choices that are good for their own health and the health of their families, but conditions in their environment can make it difficult for them to succeed. This Healthy Community Element strives to create conditions in Monterey Park that make it easier for community members to make healthy choices every day.

The health of each community member is influenced by a number of different factors that include individual factors such as genetics and individual behaviors, but also broader socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions. These broader factors are referred to as the **social determinants of health**. They are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of outcomes and risks for health, functioning, and quality of life. These factors are also where the City of Monterey Park can work to influence and support the health of the community.

Scope and Content

The Healthy Community Element establishes goals and policies to guide City efforts to support and promote a healthier community by “making the healthy choice the easy choice” for every community member. These efforts are designed to make it easier to eat well, be physically active, access health care, reverse unhealthy habits, and avoid exposure to toxins and disease. Education and communication programs by the City and its partners are crucial strategies to promote healthy choices. An active community life and strong social networks also create conditions for good health.

This Element addresses a number of topics, including:

- **Health at Home**
- **Active Living**
- **Healthy Eating**

- **Community Life**
- **Health Care and Communicable Disease Prevention**
- **Alcohol and Tobacco Use**

The conditions for creating a healthy community are addressed by a number of other General Plan Elements, especially the Sustainable Community Element, Land Use Element, Circulation Element, and Safety and Community Services Element. These Elements contribute to the framework that supports a healthy community by directing where different types of land uses are located, how streets are designed, where parks are provided, and what types of services are offered to community members. Opportunities for physical activity are supported by the goals and policies promoting a walkable and bikeable community in the Sustainable Community Element, Circulation Element, and Land Use Element.

The Healthy Community Element complements these other Elements by providing additional guidance on topics that have particular importance for promoting health—such as recreation and air quality—and introducing topics not addressed elsewhere—namely food, tobacco, alcohol, and health care.

Monterey Park Health Today

This section provides an overview of health issues and conditions influencing health in Monterey Park. A full description of the existing health conditions in Monterey Park is provided in *Technical Appendix A: Existing Conditions Report*.

Major Health Issues

Table 1 shows the leading causes of death in Monterey Park. Although deaths from **coronary heart disease** and **stroke** have declined moderately in recent years, they remain the first and second leading causes of death in the City of Monterey Park.

Diabetes, while itself not a leading cause of death, is a major cause of heart disease and stroke. High blood pressure (hypertension) also increases the risk of stroke and heart disease. Diabetes hospitalizations are increasing in Monterey Park (as in the County and California), and rates of high blood pressure diagnosis are increasing in Los Angeles County’s SPA 3 which includes Monterey Park.

Diabetes and hypertension, in turn, are closely linked to obesity which is becoming more of an issue in Monterey Park. In Los Angeles County, adult obesity rates are increasing the fastest among Asians/Pacific Islanders—although this demographic still has the lowest obesity rate. The childhood obesity rate in Monterey Park is 31st among the 128 geographic designations in Los Angeles County.

Table 1: Leading Causes of Death in Monterey Park	
1	Coronary Heart Disease
2	Stroke
3	Lung Cancer
4	Pneumonia/Influenza
5	Colorectal Cancer & Nephritis

As the third leading cause of death in Monterey Park, **lung cancer** plays a larger role in deaths here than in Los Angeles County as a whole and even in the Alhambra Health District. Lung cancer is strongly related to poor air quality and is greatly affected by tobacco use. Reports of asthma-related hospitalizations are also rising in Monterey Park, particularly for children.

Combined, **pneumonia** and **influenza (flu)** are the fourth leading cause of death in Monterey Park. Pneumonia is frequently a complication of influenza as well as other conditions and infections. Rates of vaccination for pneumonia and influenza have been declining in the Alhambra Health District since at least 2002; the adult pneumonia vaccination rate is lower than in any other Los Angeles County Health District.

Colorectal cancer and **nephritis** each rank fifth among the leading causes of death in Monterey Park. Colorectal cancer is a disease disproportionately affecting persons over age 50 and is related to heavy alcohol use. **Nephritis** is a disease of the kidneys. Diabetes and hypertension increase the risk of kidney failure.

Three Behaviors to Improve Health

Although health issues in Monterey Park are varied, many of them can be traced back to three basic behaviors: poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use. The **3-4-50** concept conveys the message that these three behaviors contribute to four types of disease that together account for more than 50 percent of deaths worldwide: cancer, heart disease and stroke, diabetes, and respiratory conditions.

As shown in Table 2, the Alhambra Health District and L.A. County SPA 3 region follow national trends in lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating habits.

By providing a supportive environment to change these **three behaviors—nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use**—Monterey Park can go far in addressing major causes of illness and death in the community.

**Table 2:
Behaviors Affecting Local Health**

- **Nearly 40% of adults reported not being physically active.¹**
- **22% of youth reported not having any physical activity.²**
- **31% of adults eat fast food at least once per week.²**
- **48% of youth eat fast food at least once per week.²**

¹ In Los Angeles County SPA 3.

² In Alhambra Health District.

How This Element Addresses Health

The Healthy Community Element provides goals and policies aimed at **improving nutrition, increasing physical activity, and reducing tobacco use** as well as **exposure to tobacco smoke**. It recognizes that behavior change comes from a combination of environmental factors including physical proximity to opportunities for healthy behavior as well as education and social influences. For instance, better nutrition can be supported by the availability and appeal of affordable healthy food as well as the individual's ability to choose wisely and prepare meals.

The Element also addresses factors beyond the three key behaviors that influence health:

- Because some respiratory health issues stem from poor air quality, this Element addresses **air pollution** from transportation corridors and sources in the home. Many residential developments in Monterey Park are located within 500 feet of a freeway.
- It addresses **alcohol**, which may be a contributing factor in colorectal cancer deaths and can also lead to crime and social problems.
- It addresses **health care access**, including mental health care, recognizing that nearly a third of adults in Monterey Park's SPA 3 area had difficulty accessing medical care in 2009.
- It promotes higher vaccination rates as part of **communicable disease prevention**, in an effort to address preventable deaths from influenza and pneumonia.
- Throughout, it recognizes the important role that **community members** play in their own health, as well as in efforts to improve the health and safety of the community as a whole.

Goals and Policies

The Healthy Community Element establishes goals, policies, and an implementation program.

Goals are general statements of aspiration or intent to achieve a desired condition that serves as an endpoint and may be attainable.

Policies are specific statements that provide a directive or framework for City decision-making that directly contribute to the attainment of the goal.

Maintained in a separate document, the **Implementation Program** includes specific implementation items, to be led by the City, which will contribute to the attainment of the General Plan goals. The Implementation Program also identifies the responsible department/agency, potential funding sources, additional resources such as model programs or potential partners, and timeframe for implementation.

HEALTH AT HOME

Healthy Homes and Neighborhoods

Goal I

Housing supports the health of its inhabitants.

Policy I.1

Healthy Housing Projects

Promote housing development and housing retrofit projects that limit exposure to pollutants and toxins.

Policy 1.2

Housing for Independent Living

Promote housing development and housing retrofit projects that facilitate independent living for seniors and people with disabilities.

Policy 1.3

Maintaining Healthy Homes

Support residents' efforts to maintain healthy homes that limit their exposure to pollutants, toxins, and safety hazards including mold, toxic gases, air pollutants, and fall hazards.

Healthy Homes

Advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on maintaining a healthy home includes tips for:

- *Drinking water safety*
- *Indoor air quality*
- *Emergency/disaster preparedness*
- *Injury prevention*
- *Food safety*
- *Poisoning prevention*

Goal2

Residents live in complete neighborhoods offering opportunities for physical activity, healthy food, and essential services within walking distance.

Policy 2.1

Increasing Services in Neighborhoods

Seek ways to introduce healthy food sales, child care, laundry facilities, and other needed services in dense neighborhoods that have limited options within walking distance.

Policy 2.2

Healthy Multi-Unit Housing

Promote the inclusion of recreation facilities, community gardens, and usable open spaces in multi-unit housing development and rehabilitation projects.

Policy 2.3

Schools as Community Hubs

Support efforts to allow schools to function as multi-service community hubs providing resources to children and adults in the surrounding neighborhoods.

HEALTH AT HOME

Air Quality Near Transportation Corridors

Goal3

Housing and other sensitive land uses are protected from exposure to air pollutants from freeways and busy transportation corridors.

Policy 3.1

Proximity to Freeways

Avoid siting new sensitive land uses within 500 feet from the centerline of a freeway.

Policy 3.2

Air Quality in New Housing Developments

Encourage new multi-unit housing developments near freeways, truck routes, and other high-traffic corridors incorporate design features and approaches that minimize the intrusion of air pollutants into common areas, private residences, and private outdoor areas.

Policy 3.3

Air Quality in Housing Retrofits

Encourage retrofits of housing and other sensitive uses near freeways and busy transportation corridors to minimize resident exposure to air pollutants.

Goal4

Emissions from vehicles traveling through Monterey Park are continually lowered to improve air quality.

Policy 4.1

City Fleet Emissions

Seek to lower total City fleet emissions from non-emergency vehicles, including Spirit Bus vehicles, toward zero emissions.

Policy 4.2

Neighborhood Electric Vehicles

In appropriate residential, commercial, and mixed use areas, encourage the use of neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs) which are designed for short “neighborhood” trips on slower-speed streets.

Policy 4.3

Low- and Zero-Emission Vehicles

Encourage the use of low- and zero-emission vehicles in Monterey Park by providing accommodations such as EV charging stations.

ACTIVE LIVING

Recreation Activities

Goal5

Residents access a range of recreation programs that offer opportunities for physical activity, learning, skill development, and social interaction.

Policy 5.1

Diverse Recreation Programs

Provide recreation programs responding to the diverse interests, needs, ages, and cultural backgrounds of Monterey Park residents.

Policy 5.2

Recreation Promotion

Promote broad awareness of the recreation opportunities offered in Monterey Park.

Policy 5.3

Convenient Program Locations

Provide recreation programs in a variety of locations to make participation convenient.

Policy 5.4

Physical Activity at City Parks and Facilities

Promote the use of City parks and facilities for physical activity, through organized activities as well as spontaneous opportunities.

Policy 5.5

Recreation Affordability

Explore offering need-based discounts, scholarships, and/or fee waivers to allow any interested community member to participate in recreation programs.

Policy 5.6

Physical Activity at City Events and Facilities

Provide physical activity opportunities as part of City-sponsored events and activities.

Policy 5.7

Private and Community-Based Recreational Opportunities

Encourage privately operated and community-based recreation opportunities.

ACTIVE LIVING

Active Parks

Goal 6

Residents access nearby parks where they can be physically active and enjoy the outdoors.

Policy 6.1

Park Improvements

Improve utility, comfort, and opportunities for physical activity at parks.

Policy 6.2

Bicycling and Walking to Parks

Provide safe access to parks by bicycling and walking.

Policy 6.3

Park Amenities

Improve the appeal of parks by providing clean restroom facilities, water fountains, and healthy food vending.

HEALTHY EATING

Healthy Food Access

Goal 7

Residents access affordable healthy food and clean drinking water, limiting their intake of unhealthy food and sugar-sweetened drinks.

Policy 7.1

Healthy Food Promotion

Encourage all retail outlets with food sales to include and promote healthy items.

Policy 7.2

Increased Availability of Healthy Food

Encourage additional healthy food outlets and mobile fresh food services—especially to provide options for community members not living or working within walking distance of healthy food.

Policy 7.3

Community Food Production

Encourage community members to grow and sell fresh produce in community gardens and on their own properties.

Policy 7.4

Healthy Food at Schools

Support efforts of school districts to serve healthy foods and to limit marketing of unhealthy snacks and beverages in and around campuses.

Policy 7.5

Food Assistance Programs

Coordinate with service providers to encourage community members to access available food assistance programs.

What is Healthy Food?

Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are important components of a healthy diet. They can be found in the cuisines of many different cultures but only make up a small part of fast food and other prepared meals that are often cheap, convenient, and readily available.

Healthy People 2020, a national science-based initiative, provides these guidelines for a healthful diet:

- *Consume a variety of nutrient-dense foods, especially whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products, and lean meats and other protein sources.*
- *Limit the intake of saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, sodium (salt), and alcohol.*
- *Limit caloric intake to meet caloric needs.*

COMMUNITY LIFE

Communication

Goal 8

Community members understand the components of healthy lifestyles and know the resources that are available to support their healthy choices.

Policy 8.1

Healthy Lifestyle Education

Coordinate with public health agencies, health providers, and community partners to provide outreach and education about lifestyle changes that can improve health—including healthy eating habits and physical activity. Materials and programs should be tailored to multiple cultures and for community members of different ages.

Policy 8.2

Communication through Library and Senior Center

Utilize the Library and Senior Center in efforts to provide informational resources about health.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Public Safety

Goal 9

The community works together to minimize crime.

Policy 9.1

Community Involvement in Crime Prevention

Promote active community involvement in efforts to provide for public safety and prevent crime.

Monterey Park Police Department Community Relations Bureau

The Monterey Park Police Department's Community Relations Bureau engages volunteers through several programs including the Business Watch and Neighborhood Watch crime prevention programs, and Citizen Patrol law enforcement program. Members of the public may take an interactive 11-week course called Citizen's Academy to learn about the operations of the department.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Community Participation

Goal 10

Residents of all ages, backgrounds, and capabilities fully participate in civic life and community activities.

Policy 10.1

Immigrant Integration

Make ongoing efforts to ensure that immigrants are aware of their rights and understand opportunities to participate in governance and civic activities.

Goal 11

Community members and community partners are engaged in efforts to create a healthier Monterey Park.

Policy 11.1

Volunteer Opportunities

Create opportunities for residents to volunteer their time and talents to contribute to community health and quality of life.

Policy 11.2

City/Community Interaction

Create opportunities for interaction between community members, elected officials, commission members, and City staff.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Social Networks

Goal 12

Residents are socially connected across generations and cultures, at the neighborhood level and citywide.

Policy 12.1

Diverse Resident Connections

Create opportunities for residents to build connections with other residents across generations and cultures.

Policy 12.2

Neighborhood Connections

Encourage residents to get to know their neighbors and to organize neighborhood associations through which they can collectively address issues such as safety, appearance, and other threats to quality of life.

Policy 12.3

Community Events

Provide and encourage community events that promote cultural understanding and a shared sense of pride in Monterey Park.

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO USE

Alcohol

Goal 13

Access to alcohol is regulated to reduce alcohol abuse, dependency, and impacts to neighborhoods.

Policy 13.1

Regulating Alcohol Sales

Regulate alcohol sales to prevent underage youth from accessing alcohol and minimize detrimental effects to areas where alcohol outlets are located.

Policy 13.2

Alcohol Treatment Publicity

Coordinate with community partners to publicize information about recognizing and overcoming alcohol addiction.

Policy 13.3

Alcohol Treatment Access

Promote access to alcohol treatment programs.

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO USE

Tobacco

Goal 14

Community members avoid using tobacco and are not exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke in gathering places, workplaces, or their homes.

Policy 14.1

Second-Hand Smoke Exposure – Outdoor Public Areas

Limit exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke in outdoor areas that are patronized by the public, including City parks, dining areas, and common areas in commercial developments.

Policy 14.2

Tobacco Cessation Programs

Support programs that help community members to stop using tobacco.

Policy 14.3

Rights to Smoke-Free Living

Disseminate messages to the public about their rights to smoke-free areas and providing referrals to tobacco cessation resources.

HEALTH CARE & COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

Health Care Access

Goal 15

Community members access culturally competent health care services for prevention and treatment.

Policy 15.1

Convenient and Affordable Health Care

Seek to provide affordable health care services in multiple locations that are convenient and accessible by walking and transit.

Policy 15.2

Transit Access to Health Care

Promote convenient transit access to the health care services on North Garfield and along Atlantic Boulevard.

Policy 15.3

Expanding Access to Health Care

Support the efforts of health providers to reach residents with limited access to health care due to lack of insurance, financial difficulty, mobility limitations, language barriers, or lack of familiarity with the health care system.

Policy 15.4

Neighborhood Health Care Services

Coordinate with health providers and schools to organize neighborhood events offering free or low-cost health screening, mobile services, and other resources for community members with limited access to health care.

Policy 15.5

Educating New Health Providers

Encourage the growth of health profession training and education opportunities in Monterey Park.

Policy 15.6

Preventive Care Promotion

Coordinate with health providers to encourage community members to access available health care services, including preventive care.

Policy 15.7

Mental Health Awareness

Coordinate with health providers to promote public awareness of mental health issues and resources.

HEALTH CARE & COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

Communicable Disease Prevention

Goal 16

Community members take measures to prevent the spread of communicable disease.

Policy 16.1

Hygiene at City Facilities and Events

Promote personal hygiene at City facilities and events.

Policy 16.2

Disease Prevention Messages

Coordinate with health providers to disseminate messages aimed at preventing the spread of communicable disease.